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A NOTE ON METHODOLOGY AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. CHOICE OF A VILLAGE: One of the first problems to be faced in this study was the choice of a village as a unit for investigation. Dragalevtsy was finally chosen on the basis of the following criteria: 121

a. It seemed representative of the villages of the *Shopski* region with respect to culture patterns and plane of living.

That the government authorities, notably the agricultural economists in the Ministry of Agriculture, considered Dragalevtsy representative along this line was shown by the fact that they selected it as one of the twenty-five villages throughout the country for a farm-income study. Another indication of its representative nature was the testimony of people who had moved into Dragalevtsy from other *Shopski* villages; they saw little difference between the culture patterns and plane of living to which they had been accustomed and those in Dragalevtsy. Officials consulted in connection with the choice of village were very quick to state that the *Shopski* region was one of the most conservative parts of the country, a point which has been borne in mind throughout the study.

b. Large enough to contain a significant number of formal groups and institutions.

Dragalevtsy was a medium-sized village, but did have all the institutions and most of the groups found in villages throughout the *Shopski* region.

c. Near enough to the American College to make possible frequent visits throughout the year.

Work at the College precluded the possibility of choosing a village on the other side of Mount Vitosha, even if that had seemed desirable. Because it fulfilled the first two requirements so well, Dragalevtsy was chosen in preference to two villages nearer the College and to others more readily accessible by automobile.

2. BECOMING EN RAPPORT WITH VILLAGERS: After being assured of the co-operation of the mayor and other officials, I cultivated the acquaintance of the peasants for a five-month period before introducing any intimate questionnaire. During this period of "acquaintance," I attended a dinner for 123

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123 Dragalevtsy people at the monastery as the mayor's guest, where, after a warm introduction by him, I spoke briefly to the people in their native language as to my reason for being with them and my desire to know all of them better. On special occasions such as Christmas and name-day celebrations I visited the people in their homes and shared their common meals. I spent a day at a "carding-bee," where thirty women were working. Not only did I visit with the women informally but also took several pictures. These were distributed gratis to the women, after which I had a ready entree into all their homes. In the course of the study, at least 250 photographs were given to the people and proved a source of much delight to them. By the end of the five-month period I was known to the whole village, and in turn could give the family names of a considerable number of men and women. Proof that these methods were successful in gaining the confidence of the people was the fact that during the three years I had only one instance of non-cooperation, that individual being a moody tavern-keeper. Other indications that I did establish a *rapport* with many of the villagers were (a) the peasants' use of *nash chovek* ("one of our very own") when speaking of me to visitors; (b) the message sent the year after my departure to the effect that, if I returned to live in Dragalevtsy, the villagers would give me land for a house.

3. COLLECTION OF DATA:

124 a. *Personal observation*: Much of the material, especially of a descriptive sort, was obtained by personal observation during the three-year period of study. My quarters were on the Main Square, which was the center of village life. During two Christmas, and one summer, vacations I lived in the village; at other times I went there for the day or the afternoon, making such a trip on the average of once every two weeks.

125 b. *Questionnaires*: At the time of the census at the end of 1934 I prepared a questionnaire on social contact and social mobility for the villagers to fill out along with all the government blanks.[1] Then, I sent to the Central Bureau of Statistics a questionnaire dealing for the most part with population characteristics. A third questionnaire was used as a basis for the study of various village organizations. In addition to these I prepared a list of questions covering the material to be embodied in every chapter. These served as the basis for interviews.

124 c. *Interviews*: I soon learned that no peasants would fill out questionnaires left with them for that purpose. All information had to be obtained through personal interviews, though schedules were useful in guiding the

[1] Such questionnaires were really filled out by village clerks, who read off the questions and wrote in the peasants' answers.